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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/E AND AF/S

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MA](#) [LT](#)

SUBJECT: LESOTHO NOT RULING OUT MILITARY INTERVENTION IN MADAGASCAR

REF: STATE 63557

CLASSIFIED BY: Elizabeth C. Power, Deputy Chief of Mission.

REASON: 1.4 (b)

¶1. (C) Post's Public Diplomacy/Economic/Political Officer delivered reftel's demarche to Deputy Principal Secretary (DPS) Lekhela of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on June 19. The DPS was very receptive to our talking points and made frank and substantive comments in response. His initial reaction was that his "bosses should talk about this one," and he stated that Foreign Minister Tsekoa and Deputy Prime Minister Lehohla would be attending the SADC summit on Madagascar.

¶2. (C) The DPS indicated that Lesotho strongly supports the restoration of a constitutionally elected government in Madagascar. He noted that, "Ravalomanana should be reinstated. A military position would be a last resort." He stated that the mention of the military possibility is being made to put as much pressure as possible on Rajoelina, saying, "Lesotho has been the beneficiary of a military intervention. It was the right thing at that time~.We are mindful that situations are different and loss of life and humanitarian interventions might follow" a military intervention in this case. He also said, "Lesotho support using key influencers in Madagascar to encourage Rajoelina to hold elections. However, will elections be held in December? If not, what will happen? Military intervention is a last resort, we are looking for other options."

¶3. (C) Stating that he was present at the last SADC meeting on Madagascar in Swaziland, the DPS said that it was agreed and understood then that Ravalomanana couldn't just be reinstated, that there needs to be a dialogue, and that this position had been explained to Ravalomanana himself. In a transition process, SADC would serve as guarantor, making certain demands of Ravalomanana "with the SADC organ watching."

¶4. (C) The DPS estimates that the SADC position is not very far removed from the US position: the basic point is a return to constitutional rule, with an elected regime, at the earliest possible time.

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